(b) The Government have conveyed their concerns to the British Government through the Indian High Commission in London. Government propose to remain in touch with the British Government in this regard.

China's stand after the visit of Indian President

1308. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state what modifications have been made by China as a Result of the recent official visit of the President of India to that country with regard to Chinese stand relating to India's insistance to maintain a reliable nuclear deterrent and the Pokhran N-test?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): The nuclear issue was not raised by the Chinese side during the President's visit to China (28 May—3 June 2000). Both sides agree that differences, including on the nuclear issue, should not be an impediment to improvement of bilateral relations.

US programme on Nuclear Missile Defence System

1309. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:

SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the US is going ahead with its Nuclear Missile Defence System;

(b) whether this will disturb the balance of power and create an asymmetric situation of nuclear capability which would become a serious threat to the world peace; and

(c) if so, Government views on this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The US is developing defence systems against different kinds of missiles, including against inter-continental ballistic missiles using conventional "hit-to-kill" interceptors. Since October 1999 three tests with this interceptor have been conducted of which two have failed; further tests are scheduled. The US programme also envisages the development of advanced early warning sensors, including a radar at Shemya in Alaska.

(b) Russia maintains that these developments are inconsistent with the bilateral 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty that prohibits deployment of nation-wide ballistic missile defence systems or the creation of the basis for such a defence, threaten strategic stability and progress on arms control, and could trigger a new arms race. Such concerns have also been strongly articulated by China. The US, however, maintains that although no decision to deploy a National Missile Defence has been taken, its plans for a limited National Missile Defence do not threaten strategic stability and has proposed modifications to the ABM Treaty to accommodate these plans.

(c) India has consistently opposed weaponisation of outer space, described in international treaty law as the common heritage of all mankind. Government believes that arms control treaties need to be implemented fully and in good faith to maintain stability. Unilateral actions perceived to be inconsistent with existing treaties may reduce the prospects for further nuclear disarmament, a goal to which India is firmly committed, weaken non-proliferation constraints and encourage other nuclear weapon state to reconsider their strategic force modernization plans.

Implications of Accord reached in India

1310. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any accord has been reached between the rebel leader George Speight, the Fijian army and the great Council of Chiefs;

(b) if so, whether Government have studied the implications of the accord; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (c) The Muanikau Accord, signed on 9th July, 2000 between the Military and George Speight provided for the release of political hostages; the restoration of law and order; grant of immunity for George Speight and other rebels (subject to release of political hostages and return of arms, ordnances and stores to the military); establishment of an interim President and Interim Vice-President, and vesting power in the Interim President to establish an Interim Civilian Government (ICG).